

Masthead Logo

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# Hoeing

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Bothered to shrug off  
The flies.

Back at the room  
You laid under a slow fan  
Only to get up  
And watch from the window  
A pup snap  
The ankle of a woman  
Carrying bricks. She kicked the dog  
And went on.

Again you turned away  
Afraid to think that it was night  
And along with the poor  
You would sleep with spiders,  
Dust in your throat  
And going down.

## Hoeing / Gary Soto

During March while hoeing long rows  
Of cotton  
Dirt lifted in the air  
Entering my nostrils  
And eyes  
The yellow under my fingernails

The hoe swung  
Across my shadow chopping weeds  
And thick caterpillars  
Who shriveled  
Into rings  
And went where the wind went

When the sun was on the left  
And against my face  
Sweat the sea  
That is still within me

Rose and fell  
From my chin  
Touching land  
For the first time